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Five Common Conflicts in Government and How to Prevent Them

When Tribal officials put the interests of our community first, we thrive. But when personal or financial interests come first, trust is broken. Let's work together to ensure our Tribal government remains accountable and transparent.

The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics has identified five common types of conflicts that should be avoided:

1. Hiring family members
2. Benefiting financially
3. Entering into contracts with the government
4. Accepting gifts
5. Using authority for personal gain

The good news is that there are tools to combat these conflicts and build trust in our Tribal government. Here's how:

1. Training in ethical awareness
2. Clear and consistent policies
3. Disclosure requirements (Gift reports, Attestation & Disclosure statements)
4. Recusal and delegation
5. Sunshine practices (public records request, EBCI portal, open meetings)

By implementing these measures, we can build a Tribal government that is both effective and trustworthy.

ETHICS IN THE NEWS



TENNESSEE REP. GINO BULSO FACES ETHICS COMPLAINT OVER SPONSORING OF BOOK BILL

A Brentwood Tennessee woman this week filed an ethics complaint against Rep. Gino Bulso alleging the lawmaker and practicing attorney violated conflict of interest rules after he filed legislation that could affect the outcome of a legal case he's currently involved in.

Erica Bowton filed the complaint with the House Ethics Committee on April 15, arguing Bulso ran afoul of House ethics rules by sponsoring House Bill 1632, which Bowton said would give Bulso a "clear legal advantage in a lawsuit in which he serves as attorney for the plaintiffs." Bulso, R-Brentwood, called the complaint "meritless" on Thursday.

Bulso represents a group of parents and the conservative activist group Citizens for Renewing America in a lawsuit against the Williamson County Board of Education. The group sued the county school board over Tennessee's library book law, arguing they should be allowed to challenge books on the shelves even if their children don't attend Williamson County schools.

Meanwhile, Bulso's HB 1632 would allow any parent whose children are eligible to attend a local school to challenge library books. Though the bill passed in the Senate, it stalled in the House and won't be passed this session. Bulso previously told The Tennessean there wasn't a conflict between his involvement in the legal case and sponsoring a bill to change state law, even though the two would effectively accomplish the same outcomes.

[msn.com](https://www.msn.com)

ETHICS SPOTLIGHT: CONFLICTS

Tribal officials have a responsibility to make decisions that are fair and in the best interests of the Tribe. But sometimes, a personal connection or financial interest can get in the way. It's like being on a jury and knowing one of the people involved- it can be hard to be objective.

Cherokee Code Section 117-45 The Standards of Ethical Conduct identifies two key types of conflicts that could affect Tribal decisions:

Personal interest: Would a decision benefit you, your family, or your friends in a way that's not available to everyone else? That's a personal interest.

Conflict of interest: This is when a decision could benefit you or someone close to you, even if it's not a direct financial gain.

Recusal: The Right Choice

When a Tribal official finds themselves in a situation where their personal interests or a conflict of interest could influence their decision, the Code of Ethics calls for recusal. This means stepping aside from the discussion and letting others decide. It's about putting the needs of the Tribe first, ensuring that every decision is made fairly and with integrity.

REMINDERS

Due July 15

Q3 Gift Report



"When my office would require me to either violate my conscience or violate the national interest, then i would resign my office; and I hope any conscientious public servant would do the same"

-John F. Kenndy

ETHICS QUESTIONS



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ELEVATE YOUR ETHICS